

# EMPLOYER UPDATE

North Region Edition

July 2000



## Employers Address Work/Life Needs

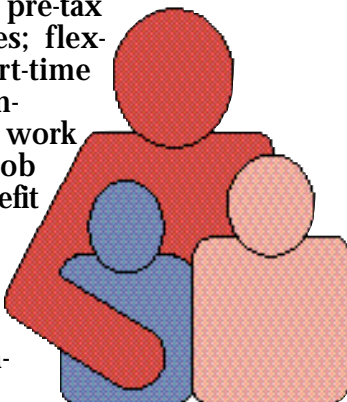
By Lydia Stevenson

Work/Life issues in the business sector have increased significantly in the last few years, particularly with the low employment rate. Many companies have done extensive wage surveys to keep up with the times but are finding that employees are still leaving.

At a recent workshop held at Weber State University and co-sponsored by DWS, Child Care Resource and Referral (CCRR) and DWS' Office of Child Care (OCC), these issues and more were discussed.

Taking a proactive approach to work/life will have positive impacts on recruitment and retention, productivity, raising morale, and give employees an enhanced commitment to the company, according to Lynette Rasmussen of OCC.

Leslie Trottier of CCRR at Weber State University told the participating employers that there are many ways to address work/life without costly expenditures and that many employers are doing good things already such as: pre-tax set asides; flex-time, part-time and compressed work weeks; job and benefit sharing; tuition assistance, and continuing



education. Companies may want to be more creative when looking at work/life needs and address the needs of all employees. No cost or low cost brown bag seminars for employees on topics such as "Beating the Back to School Blues," "Winter Holiday Stress Busters," and "What Makes Kids Tick" are conducted by CCRR.

Allow services to come on-site such as child care, fitness centers, cosmetologists, or massage therapists.

Offer personal enrichment classes before, after or during work. Translate current practices into new services such as offering not only education tuition support but also child care tuition support; allow the use of personal sick leave for elder care or a sick child; offer pet insurance for those not using family medical insurance; offer flex-time for parents to attend special school events but then also offer those without children or older children flex-time to volunteer in the community; and negotiate or subsidize fees for gym dues, child care and elder care.

One of the most important steps is to ask your employees what their concerns are and what they need and want. One way to do this is to take advantage of a survey provided by DWS to address these needs. It is currently being revised but for more information contact Elysha Oakeson at (801) 526-4340. For more information on CCRR call (801) 626-7837.

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The staff direct job fairs, mass recruitments, employer education, etc. Call today for more information.

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## The Power of Partnership

The development of UWORKS is an enlightening example of public/private sector partnerships. The project required leaders from all levels of government to work with private sector software developers at Oracle, to build a one-stop case management system. The project, entitled "UWORKS," has been under development since September 1998.

Driven by massive changes in federal welfare reform, the UWORKS system is designed to link end-users to a central information repository containing almost any type of data they might need. Currently, DWS employment counselors must navigate through multiple systems to provide services formerly delivered by five separate agencies. The new system will simplify things considerably.

"The evolution of the welfare program was focused more on employment," said John Davenport, Information Analyst for DWS. "When Congress passed the Welfare-to-Work Program it provided additional funding for the most needy individuals along with job training; this meant we had to handle multiple functions."

Specifically, UWORKS is a case management system that supports the capturing of data about job seekers, employers, and service providers to support meaningful employment for the job seeker.

Functionally the system tracks the job seeker through such phases as intake, assessment, program eligibility, employment planning, activity funding, job search and placement.

Oracle was chosen because it

**We're on the web!**

*See this newsletter  
and others at:*

<http://north.dws.state.ut.us/empnews.htm>

<http://central.dws.state.ut.us/newsletter/cennewslet.htm>

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<http://east.dws.state.ut.us/newsletter/newslet.htm>

<http://west.dws.state.ut.us/newsletter.htm>

could design and develop a large, multi-task database that contains all of the Workforce Investment Act information and Welfare Reform information in one place.

The overall purpose of the project is to develop an automated job matching and career counseling system that will provide

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***UWORKS will provide  
automated job matching  
and career counseling to  
better serve job seekers  
and employers alike.***

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accountability, tracking and reporting of all services provided by our Employment Centers (Utah's One Stops) and the Internet (self-service or "No Stop").

The system is being designed to support Utah and other interested states in the delivery of employment and training services. To provide the information the system must have the ability to transfer assets and communicate with other systems. This

means Utah's system has to be available to other states as well as the federal government.

Developing UWORKS was a major undertaking that would not have been possible without successful partnerships that are almost unprecedented in today's highly competitive and regulated climate. "It took a lot of coordination and cooperation with all of the entities involved," stated Paul Peterson, Senior Systems Analyst with DWS. "We worked with the Labor Department, Human Services and the Department of Agriculture, as well as with the various entities in Oracle and America's Job Bank."

The arrival of the completed program is very much anticipated by employment counselors and front line staff. UWORKS will go a long way to reduce stress. "We are excited about the ability to use technology to further the success of our customers," said Robin Parker in the Cedar City Employment Center.

Statewide implementation of UWORKS is scheduled for this month.

## New Unemployment Insurance Web Pages for Employers

You need answers. Fast. The answers to most common questions asked about Unemployment Insurance (UI) quarterly wage reporting and tax filing are now available at your fingertips. Last month, the UI Contributions Section quietly introduced new web pages under the Unemployment Insurance heading of our website @ [www.dws.state.ut.us](http://www.dws.state.ut.us).

The website contains instructions, definitions, requirements and forms related to state unemployment tax. Employers and tax professionals can quickly find the answers to such questions as:

- What are the minimum and maximum tax rates?

- How does a new employer establish an account?

- What is the current taxable wage base?

The employers' list of menu items includes UI Employer Registration, UI Tax Rates, Quarterly Reporting, Tax Forms, UI Tax Publications, Employer Appeals, UI Rules, UI Laws and Contact Us!

Response has been positive; one employer called immediately to say that "all the information... needed was there and was very accessible." Information continues to be added to the new web pages, and plans are under way to offer on line transaction of most UI reporting and filing activities by July 2002.

## We're in the spotlight...

DWS will host the Interstate Conference of Employment Security Agencies (ICESA) Annual Conference in September. Workforce development representatives from around the nation will enjoy a reception and dinner at the Olympic Sports Park, entertainment by the USA ski-jumping team, a tour of the LDS Visitor's Center, and a performance by the world-famous Mormon Tabernacle Choir. The conference will be held at the Little America Hotel. For more information, contact Tracey Leetham at (801) 526-9204.



## it's only a myth...

### Myth #4:

Workforce Services has only low skilled or entry level applicants.

### Reality:

Recent data shows a year-to-date total of 55,971 applicants registered for services at our Employment Centers. Those applicants represent the full spectrum of professional and non-professional skill levels.

During that same time period there were over 49,706 job openings received as well as 3,746 first-time employers served.

*Watch for more myths in upcoming editions.*

## Kudos...

"Thanks for taking a little stress off a small business person...I was doubly impressed with your added effort to put me at ease and answer my [UI tax] questions. This level of service is not experienced every day in government or in business. I hope you will share this letter...to indicate my appreciation for your professional proficiency."

*H. Gray Otis  
Heritage Hardwood Floors  
American Fork*

"I have never seen an employment agency that has worked so hard to help with recruitment."

*Darin, Manager  
New Winger's in Tooele*

"Thank you for hosting the Taylorsville City and DWS Job Fair. The feedback received has been very positive. All 16 employers were very impressed with the customer service and quality of your staff...and have requested we do this again."

*Bruce Wasden  
Taylorsville City Council Member*

"I would like to thank you and your staff for your assistance with our study on One-Stop Career Centers...The staff at the Metro, So. County, Provo North, Kanab and St. George centers were very helpful and attentive."

*Gale Harris  
U.S. General Accounting Office*

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## North Region

### Futura Industries is "Employee Friendly"

**P**roviding an environment where individual situations and needs are considered is of foremost importance to Futura Industries which is located in the Freeport Center in Clearfield.

Tami Olsen, Work/Life and Human Resource Director of the company, recently spoke to a group of fellow employers at a DWS workshop about what her company does that has earned Futura the distinction of being one of the Top 10 Family-Friendly Companies in Utah.

"We're not just family-friendly, we're employee friendly," said Olsen. For example on every

employee's birthday they are treated to lunch by a member of the human resource staff.

Then the staff and employee have an opportunity for a one-on-one talk not just about work-related issues but home-life issues too. Each week the company publishes a newsletter for employees with company updates but also articles on healthy living, exercise and healthy lifestyles.

With the assistance of Child Care Resource and Referral, a program of DWS and based at Weber State University, brown bag lunch seminars are offered on a variety of topics from child

care issues to finance planning.

The company also provides parents of school age children the opportunity to go to parent-teacher conferences and to be with their child on the first day of school. This past fall all the children of employees received a goody bag with age appropriate items for school.

It is these examples and many more that make Futura a great place to work.

**Visit our website at:  
[www.dws.state.ut.us](http://www.dws.state.ut.us)**